

In the Claims

Please substitute amended claim 1 for pending claim  
1 as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of oxygenating yeast slurry  
comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a yeast slurry having about 40  
g/l yeast to about 80 g/l yeast on a dry weight basis;

(b) passing at least a portion of the yeast  
slurry through a membrane contactor, the contactor  
comprising at least one hydrophobic, microporous  
membrane, the membrane having a liquid side and a gas  
side, wherein the contactor is connected to an oxygen  
source, and wherein at least a portion of the yeast  
slurry is in proximity to the membrane on the liquid  
side;

(c) delivering oxygen from the oxygen source  
to the gas side of the membrane under conditions that  
cause at least a portion of the oxygen to transfer from  
the gas side of the membrane to the yeast slurry.

Please add the following claim:

--9 The method of claim 1, wherein the yeast slurry  
is oxygenated prior to pitching the yeast with a  
fermentable liquid medium.--